



Figure #34: It's very hard to find data backing up the claims of no-till gardening. Certainly Ruth Stout never kept records of her days tilling the garden versus her days of no-till, deep-straw beds. The above is one of two examples I know of that provides data about surface cultivation.

2% greater yield the first year. Over time, you'll notice that total yields drop to only 70% of those of the cultivated (single dug) "control" plot. This simply means you again have the choice between vertical or horizontal gardening. You can always add more nutrients via single digging to restart the low-till process or spread out your planting area to compensate for reduced yields.

A Successful Market Farm Using Surface Cultivation

While most readers will not be growing a market garden, I did discover a fine example of the efficient use of surface cultivation in a commercial setting, which indicates that it can, in fact, be adapted to a larger scale of planting. Most of the following techniques can be

adapted to the home garden.

This anecdotal evidence was collected from an organic market garden in England with 12 years of experience in surface cultivation. This garden was not only successful, but "sales were on a competitive basis." More amazingly, the garden was maintained *without the use of any manures*. The book about this remarkable market garden is entitled—at great length—*Intensive Gardening, Using Dutch Lights, Surface Cultivation and Composting for the Commercial Production of Crops, and Introducing a Motion-Study Routine*, 1956 by Rosa Dalziel O'Brien.

Here are some highlights from the book, which help to illustrate how this market garden was put together: